

Dr. Peterson

Amelia Gambino Retirement Reception

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2014

- Amelia has played a vital leadership role at Georgia Tech, serving under 6 of 17 presidents and interim presidents. She joined Tech in June of 1987 when Henry Bourne was interim president. Dr. Pettit had passed away the previous fall, and Pat Crecine became Tech's president in November of 1987. (Michael Thomas, Wayne Clough, Gary Schuster)
- Integral role in the Institute's success. When I came, she had already been here 22 years; valuable resource. Energy and commitment to make things happen, and I might add to prevent things from happening, like tree removal on campus! I appreciate that Amelia has always been proactive, planning ahead and thinking strategically.
- Amelia became part of what was then the Communications and Development team. They were housed in the basement of Lyman Hall, down the hall from where CE did their garbage experiments. Between the noxious fumes one day a week and the Whistle blowing right outside her window on the hour, she passed the test of overcoming challenges in her job. Her group became known as IC and Public Affairs, then C&M, and now Institute Communications.
- She has seen, and participated in, many changes during the past 27 years.
 - Fall 1987: 6,400 freshman applicants. Quadrupled. For Fall 2014: 25,000.
 - Enrollment has almost doubled, going from 11,780 to 21,500 today.
 - Tenured and tenure-track teaching faculty has almost doubled, from 534 to 900.
 - The number of women students has more than doubled, going from 2,588 to 6,625.
 - In 1987 Tech awarded 2,532 degrees. This past year Tech awarded 5,572 degrees.
 - The average starting salary of grads was \$29,500. Today it is \$65,000.

- Campus footprint almost tripled, square footage of 4.9 million to 14.9 million today.
- 1996 summer Olympics in Atlanta: 16-year building plan was completed in 3 years. Amelia was a team player. Many times she served as the guide for the campus bus tours before Olympics.
- She has served as interim AVP of Communications 3 times. 1st time: incident with the nuclear reactor that attracted national media attention. 2nd time Katrina. Called Wayne Clough after 9 one evening to discuss the Red Cross' request to house several hundred evacuees in what was then Alexander Memorial Coliseum. Amelia participated in 6:30 a.m. meetings to work out details quickly. Just one of many times when she had to organize something major in record time. In 1992, Tech found out just five days in advance that we would host the VP candidate debates.
- Amelia met some famous people: The Clintons, Steve Jobs, Al Gore, George W. Bush, John Lewis and Andy Young. She interviewed Jimmy Carter. Her interest in people is not limited to the famous. A friend, a mentor, and a champion for student success. One of her favorite events, and mine as well, is commencement. We've done some research, and since June 1987, Georgia Tech has awarded 100,738 degrees. I believe you've been there to see most of them cross the stage. Thank you for your behind-the-scenes role in their success from application through commencement, and for the mark you've made on all of us in the Georgia Tech family. We wish you and Tom the best.